

## **Compulsory sample tests for employees in retail trade companies which supply foodstuff and drinks and at nursing homes**

Having detected confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus in chain companies in retail trade which supply foodstuff and having experienced unwillingness by some of these companies to participate in the Programme relating to 20,000 laboratory analysis, professing fear for a likely negative fallout on their company, the Ministry of Health, during today's meeting of the Council of Ministers, decided, among other things, for reasons of public health, the following:

All the employees of companies in the retail trade of food and drinks, such as bakeries, supermarkets, kiosks, butcheries, fishmongers etc, who are part of the supply chain of the above mentioned businesses (production of food/drinks, distribution, points which serve the public) have to be tested for coronavirus within the next 14 days.

All the people who are working in care homes for the elderly, in nursing homes, and in general in places which provide care and accommodation for the elderly also have to be tested for corona virus within 14 days.

All the above professionals can be tested free of charge in laboratories which are cooperating with the Ministry of Health. A list of these laboratories has been posted, in the framework of the Programme of the Ministry of Health for laboratory tests for 20,000 employees in the public and the semi-public domains as well as the private sector. The said professionals can also be tested privately, paying the relevant cost at approved laboratories which carry out molecular tests (PCR – polymerase chain reaction).

The competent Services in cooperation with the Unit for Epidemiological Monitoring, at the end of the deadline of 14 days, will carry out tests to ensure that all affected employees have undergone laboratory tests for COVID-19.

To protect the public, the molecular analysis for COVID-19, carried out by approved laboratories, will be regulated by a Decree at the highest cost of 110 euro (not including VAT).

Moreover, the Sanitary Services of the Ministry of Health is increasing its checks concerning the implementation of the new Decree of the Health Ministry for the immediate and compulsory removal of ALL the personnel when a positive case is detected, in companies in retail trade dealing with foodstuff and drinks (not only the close contacts of these cases as was stipulated until recently) as well as for the immediate disinfection of the area. Business can resume trading only if the instructions of the Unit for Epidemiological Monitoring have been observed. The Unit will grant the relevant approval for returning to work.

Furthermore, in order to protect public health, the Unit for Epidemiological Monitoring, within 24 hours of detecting even one positive case at premises/companies which serve the public, will announce the name and the address of the premises of the business, where the confirmed case of coronavirus has been found.

More details will be announced later on in a relevant Decree by the Minister of Health.